Setting up of National Rural Bank

1114. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any final decison for setting up of the proposed National Rural Bank;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the proposed places where the bank's branches are to be set up initially; and

(c) the steps taken so far towards setting up of the bank?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) After considering a number of alternative models for restructuring of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) including National Rural Bank, it has been decided to provide budgetary support for recapitalisation of RRBs on a 'stand alone' basis. Accordingly, in pursuance of an announcement by the Finance Minister in his Budget Speech on 28.02.1994, 49 of the 196 RRBs were taken up in the course of 1994-95 for cleansing up of their balance sheets and infusion of fresh capital. Equity support has been released for another batch of 53 RRBs in 1995-96. A provision of Rs. 200 crores has been made for this purpose in the Budget for 1996-97. Further, with effect from 26.8.1996, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has deregulated the interest rates that can be charged by the RRBs. The objective is to transform presently weak and ailing RRBs into financially viable and effective instruments of decentralised rural banking.

Steps to Protect Indian FIs/Share Holders Subsequent to FERA Violations by ITC

1115. SHRI VED PRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether on unearthing of large scale FERA violations by ITC and in the wake of raids by the Enforcement Directorate on the offices of ITC at Calcutta and other places the steps Government propose to take to protect the interest of Indian Financial Institutions and Indian shareholders; and

(b) what steps are contemplated to ensure that the management of the Company does not slip into foreign hand?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b). The investigations under the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1973 undertaken by the Enforcement Directorate against M/s. ITC Ltd., are continuing. Indian shareholders (including Financial Institutions) hold majority of the shares in ITC. Any decison regarding future of the company will necessarily have to be taken by them with the consent of the shareholders in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act.

Statement about state of Economy by Former Finance Minister

1116. SHRI O. P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the former Finance Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh has said that the industrial growth has slowed down, export growth has come down substantially in the first half of the current fiscal year and rate of inflation has gone up;

(b) if so, whether he has attributed this to the 'ad hoc' approach of the Government; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b). It has been reported in the newspapers that the former Finance Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh gave an interview to a private TV Channel on Monday November 11, 1996 in which he expressed his views.

(c) The cyclical fluctuations in production, exports and prices are part of the dynamics of the development process. There are indications that in the second half of the current financial year industrial and export growths are likely to stabilise and improve.

Long pending demand of linking Bombay, M.P., Bihar and Orissa by flights

1117. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of a long pending demand of a daily flight on Bombay-Jabalpur-Patna-Raipur-Bhubaneshwar route linking thereby Bombay with Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa;

(b) if so, whether any feasibility of survey was undertaken or being undertaken to meet the growing demand from the passengers; and

(c) if so, by when such flight is likely to be introduced and if not, the limitation thereon?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C. M. IBRAHIM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Indian Airlines is already operating thrice a week A 320 service on the sector Mumbai-Patna-Ranchi-Calcutta and return. They have no plans to operate on Mumbai-Jabalpur-Patna-Raipur-Bhubaneshwar route, at present, due to operational/commerical constraints. However, Private Operators are being encouraged to start services to these stations.

Private Agencies' Proposal to set up Hospitals and Medical Colleges in Orissa

1118. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some private agencies have informed Government of their intention to participate in Government's programmes to set up major hospitals and medical colleges in the country;

(b) if so, whether any private agency has submitted any project/proposal before Government to set up major hospital in Orissa; and

(c) if so, the places identified for the purpose and other details?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI): (a) Private agencies do establish hospitals and Medical Colleges for which they have to seek permission as laid down by the State in respect of hospitals and as contained in the Indian Medical council (Amendment) Act, 1993 in the case of medical colleges. The cases of foreign investers is determined by the procedures of the Foreign Investment Promotion Board.

(b) and (c) Two proposals of NRIs for setting up hospitals at Bhubneshwar have been approved. These proposals are from M/s. Kalinga Hospital Pvt. Ltd., Puri at the cost of Rs. 650.00 lakhs and M/s. Orissa Heart Institute at the cost of Rs. 300.00 lakhs, respectively.

Dubbing of Mega serials into other Indian Languages

1119. SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a substantial portion of our population are non-Hindi speaking people; and

(b) if so, whether he will direct the Doordarshan officials to dub the mega serials into other important Indian languages also?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND